



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on March 21, 2023

Published in the April 10, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 07

Christianity and Socialism

Karl Marx, the father of communism, called religion “the opium of the people.” He also wrote, on another occasion, that “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary it is their social existence that determines their consciousness.”

Marx believed that the communist revolution would change the supposedly malleable consciousness of men by changing their social existence. So how would men be changed under communism? Regarding religion specifically, Marx believed they would no longer have any need for “the opium of the people.” Marx was an atheist, and under communism he envisioned that everyone else would abandon their religion and become atheists as well. Of course, he could not have been more wrong.

Christians who support socialism should carefully consider Marx’s antipathy toward religion. After all, Marx (along with Frederick Engels) wrote [The Communist Manifesto](#), the most famous of all socialist literature. The fact that this manifesto is called a *Communist* manifesto should not be misunderstood as diminishing its importance in the socialist canon. In fact, as Engels noted, the *Manifesto* was originally going to be called *The Socialist Manifesto* before the decision was made to change the title prior to publication.

Christians who support socialism should also consider what happens to people of faith when communists acquire absolute power. Far from religion disappearing naturally because the people no longer have any use for this “opium,” the communists persecute people of faith. Yet no matter the extent of the persecution — no matter how many people of faith are imprisoned, tortured, or killed — the communists are unable to eradicate the “opium” that they so despise.

The communists therefore attempt to infiltrate and control the supposed opium of the people. They even place their agents inside religion. This is not just for the purpose of monitoring people of faith, but also for the purpose of subverting the people’s faith from inside the churches. In the case of Christianity, the communists seek to replace the Gospel of Christ with the gospel of Marx. Portraying Jesus as a socialist is a manifestation of this bait and switch.

Of course, this insidious effort to subvert Christianity from inside the churches is not limited to communist countries. It is global, and it is ongoing. Yet even though communists and socialists are able to lead many of the faithful astray through their subversion, they are unable to trick many others into losing their faith. In China, where the Christian churches allowed by the communists must abide by communist dictates, underground churches have been created by the faithful outside the communist-controlled churches, despite the grave dangers to the faithful who attend these churches.

According to socialist/communist theory, the state is supposed to wither on the vine after communism comes to power. In practice, however, the communist state clings to its power, and that power is used to suppress religion, which, the communist totalitarians believe, is an unacceptable competing loyalty to the state.

So is it possible to be both a Christian and a socialist? The answer is no, for the simple reason that Christianity and socialism are incompatible.

And could Jesus have been a socialist? The answer is no, once again. If Jesus were a socialist, He could not have been a Christian, yet He is the founder of Christianity.



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We encourage our readers to read the cover story "[Was Jesus a Socialist?](#)" by Selwyn Duke, which examines this question in much more detail.

Finally, we wish everyone a very blessed Easter. Christ is risen, and there is nothing the enemies of God can do to change this reality. Nor, for that matter, is there anything they can do to destroy what is in the hearts of men. They may break the physical body, but they cannot destroy the immortal soul.

— *Gary Benoit*



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